1st. Edition

GENERAL VIEW

OF THE

AGRICULTURE

OF THE COUNTY OF

MIDDLESEX.

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GENERAL VIEW

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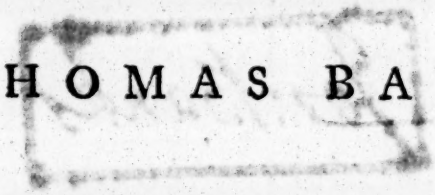
WITH OBSERVATIONS ON THE MEANS OF ITS IMPROVEMENT.

BY THOMAS BAIRD.



DRAWN UP FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND INTERNAL IMPROVEMENT.

K. Academies etc

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following intelligent paper, reſpecting the preſent ſtate of huſbandry in the county of Middleſex, and the means of its improvement, drawn up for the conſideration of the Board of Agriculture, is now printed, merely for the purpoſe of its being circulated there, in order that every perſon, intereſted in the welfare of that county, may have it in his power to examine it fully before it is publiſhed.—It is therefore requeſted, that any remark, or additional obſervation, which may occur to the reader, on the peruſal of the following ſheets, may be tranſmitted to the Board of Agriculture, at its office in London, by whom the ſame ſhall be properly attended to; and, when the returns are completed, an account will be drawn up of the ſtate of agriculture in Middleſex, from the information thus accumulated, which, it is believed, will be found greatly ſuperior, to any thing of the kind, ever yet made public.

The Board will probably follow the ſame plan, in regard to all the other counties in the united kingdom; and, it is hardly neceſſary to add, will be happy to give every aſſiſtance in its power, to any perſon who may be deſirous of improving his breed of cattle, ſheep, &c. or of trying any uſeful experiment in huſbandry.

INTRO-

INTRODUCTION.

For remarks and additional obſervations.

THE county of Middleſex, though the firſt in Great-Britain in point of population, is among the ſmalleſt in point of extent, being only about twenty-four miles in length from Eaſt to Weſt, and eighteen in breadth from North to South. It is divided into ſix hundreds and two liberties. It contains two cities, which, united, form the capital of Great-Britain; and five market-towns; beſides a great number of populous villages. It is bounded on the South by the river Thames; and that part of it, next the river, may be reckoned a portion of the extenſive vale of the Thames, which, for beauty and rich cultivation, is, perhaps, unequalled by any other vale in Europe. Towards the North and Eaſt it is moſt beautifully diverſified by ſmall eminencies, or green hills, whoſe verdure is hardly impaired even by the cold and ſtorms of winter.

The number of acres in this county may be computed to be about 260,000; by far the greateſt proportion of which conſiſts of meadow or paſturage; the vicinity of the capital rendering that mode of occupying the ſoil the moſt profitable. The ſmall part that is under the plough is, in general, in good cultivation, and yields heavy crops of all kinds of grain; but, to the reproach of natives, and to the utter aſtoniſhment of every foreigner who viſits us,

For remarks and additional obſervations.

it contains many thouſand acres ſtill in a ſtate of nature; and, though within a few miles of the capital, as little improved by the labour of man, as if they belonged to the Cherokees, or any other tribe of American ſavages. Upon viewing theſe waſtes, ſuch as Hounſlow-heath, Finchley-common, &c. and comparing their preſent income and produce to what it might be raiſed by the aid and induſtry of man, it may juſtly be affirmed, that an improving income of perhaps £. 50,000. *per annum* is thrown away, with as careleſs an indifference, as if the owners were afraid of being too rich. And when it is conſidered, that ſuch an income is not only loſt to the owners, but that the public at large loſes the uſe of productions worth, perhaps, £. 200,000. *per annum*, it will readily be allowed that it is a great national object to purſue the means of preventing ſuch a loſs in future; and, at the ſame time, of removing ſuch a reproach upon the good ſenſe and induſtry of the country.

In regard to the following obſervations, it is to be remarked, that the occupiers of land, in the neighbourhood of London, are naturally cautious in giving a ſtranger the information, reſpecting either rent or produce, that the Board may think it neceſſary to have. This may proceed from the hurry of buſineſs, in which they ſeem to be engaged, or (which is more natural) from a jealouſy of the motives of the enquiry, which few, or any of them, will give themſelves the trouble to be ſatisfied about. At a greater diſtance from the metropolis, this will not, probably, be the caſe.

This circumſtance, however, it is to be hoped, will be a ſufficient apology for the ſhortneſs of this paper, and any defects that may be found in it.

Almoſt the whole of the cultivated land in this county, is occupied in graſs, gardening, pleaſure-grounds, and

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nurſeries. In the more immediate vicinity of London you find nothing elſe; by which means, the obſervations, in a ſurvey of this kind, are much more limited, and leſs various, than in a county, where the operations and practice of the plough, can be traced, into all the different ſyſtems of huſbandry, practiſed by the intelligent and experienced farmer; or, where every different ſpecies of ſtock has been brought to any conſiderable degree of perfection.

The whole county of Middleſex, may very properly be conſidered, as a ſort of demeſne to the metropolis, being covered with its villas, interſected by the innumerable roads leading to it, and laid out in gardens, paſtures, and incloſures of all ſorts for its convenience and ſupport. Very little corn is grown in it, the land being applicable, by the force of manure, to purpoſes ſo much more valuable. It ſwarms with people in its numerous and extenſive villages; but no large towns can exiſt in the neighbourhood of that, which attracts people ſo ſtrongly, from every part of the kingdom.

The SOIL, &c.

This county is a diſtrict of no great natural fertility, its general ſoil being a lean gravel; nevertheleſs, in conſequence of its vicinity to the metropolis, and the uncommon ſhare of warmth and manure, reſulting from that circumſtance, many parts of it, are rendered very fruitful, and clothed with almoſt perpetual verdure.

In the Eaſtern parts of Middleſex, round Bow, Bethnal-Green, Stepney, &c. you find the greateſt part of the ground under nurſery. The grounds cloſe by Bow, in the hands of Gordon and Co. and other nurſery-men, ſeem, in point of extent, as well as management, ſuperior to any thing of the kind, in this part of the county. Fancy-flowers, and flowering ſhrubs, are the articles chiefly raiſed; and it is wonderful, what ſums of money go for theſe things.

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The conſumption is, in a great meaſure, confined to the City. From this quarter, round by Hackney, Iſlington, and for ſeveral miles thereabouts, the cow-keepers engroſs every inch of land they can procure. The quantity of milk, conſumed by the metropolis, muſt be very great indeed. Some of theſe cow-keepers, have remarkable large ſtocks of cows, for the purpoſe of ſupplying this neceſſary article: one farmer has, on the different farms he poſſeſſes in that neighbourhood, very near 800; in one yard I ſaw about 300 cows; and, as at this ſeaſon of the year, they are in the fineſt order, and their colours are different and beautifully variegated, I could not help being much pleaſed with a ſcene ſo near London, at once ſo rich and rural. The cow-keepers are not particular as to their breed; for you will find in their hands, beaſts as various in their kinds, as in their colours,—a cow that gives a great quantity of milk is naturally preferred; quantity, not quality, being the object.

From what I could obſerve, the milk is delivered, entirely free from adulteration, to the people who retail it in London; and as they have it unadulterated, at the rate of three-farthings a pint, and retail it at three-halfpence, their profit is ſurely ſo great, as ought not to tempt them to any adulteration. But when it is conſidered, how much their milk is lowered by water, and other worſe mixtures, it is matter of regret, that no method has hitherto been fallen upon, to prevent the abuſes, ſo juſtly complained of, in regard to this very neceſſary article of life *.

The

* Not ſat'sfied with the profit above ſtated, which, conſidering the difference of meaſure, is above one hundred *per cent.* it is a common practice with the retailers of this uſeful article, to carry the milk firſt home to their own houſes, where it is ſet up for half a day; when the cream is taken from it, at leaſt all that comes up in that time, and it is then ſold for new-milk;—by which means, what is delivered in the morning, is no other than the milk of the

For remarks and additional obſervations.

The cow-keepers breed very few cattle, and thoſe they do breed, only from favourite cows, which become ſo, merely from their giving much milk, and with very little attention to the choice of their bulls. Even in ſummer, and when the graſs is in the greateſt plenty, the cows are regularly, at leaſt once a day, fed with grains, which, though the quantity of milk may be thereby increaſed, does by no means add to its quality. Some of them have tried ſalt, mixed with the grains, more with a view to preſerve the grains longer in a ſound ſtate, than from any conſideration of the health of their ſtock, or the improvement of the quality of the milk. It is acknowledged, that the cows eat the grains ſo mixed with greater avidity; but the proprietors, not getting an adequate return for their trouble and expence, I do not find that it is now much practiſed. Five or ſix men only are employed in attending near 300 cows; but as one woman cannot milk, above eight or nine twice a day, that part of the buſineſs muſt be attended with a very heavy expence.

The rent of land, in general, for ſeveral miles Eaſt, North, and Weſt of London, according to the beſt in-

the preceding afternoon, deprived of the cream it throws up by ſtanding during that time. By this means a further conſiderable profit accrues to the retailer; and the milk is greatly reduced in point of ſtrength and quality. This cream, poor as it is, is again mixed with flower, chalk, and perhaps other more baneful ingredients; and yet finds a quick and ready market in the metropolis.

It is matter of ſurprize, that in the city of London, ſo long and deſervedly famous for the attention and vigilance of its magiſtrates, in the conduct and regulation of the markets, no notice has hitherto been taken, or any means adopted, to prevent the abuſes, ſo generally and juſtly complained of, in an article, the conſumption of which (in London and its environs alone) is greater than in half the cities of Europe.—Milk has always been a favourite part of the food of Britons; and, in a great and populous city, it is highly conducive to the health of the inhabitants.—*Lacte & carne vivunt*, ſays Cæſar, in his Commentaries.

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formation to be obtained, runs from four to ſix pounds an acre; and if parliamentary, as well as parochial taxes, which are uſually paid by the farmers, are added, the total will be conſiderable. The poor-rates, in many pariſhes in the neighbourhood of London, are as high as five ſhillings in the pound; and great complaints are made againſt the perſons employed in the management of this part of pariſh duty.

The ſyſtem of huſbandry practiſed in Middleſex, is almoſt invariably the ſame. The plough is ſeldom uſed; and the lands more remote from the City, and towards the extremities of the county, are ſolely occupied in raiſing hay for the London-market. From the lower and richer grounds, they cut two crops in the ſeaſon; a practice which could no where be adopted, but where land is properly watered, or in the vicinity of a great City, where the command of manure is ſuperabundant. In the higher grounds, round Highgate and Hampſtead, and farther on to Barnet and that neighbourhood, they cut only once, and manure every three years. The expence of manuring an acre, may be eſtimated at about nine pounds.

About Chelſea, the fields are for the greateſt part in the hands of nurſery-men. The grounds in this neighbourhood, in the occupation of common gardeners, are, in general, not ſo well dreſſed, though the ſoil here is lighter than to the Northward; and, conſequently, fitter for garden crops. About Brompton, Kenſington, and to the Weſtward, the nurſery and garden-grounds are clean and well cultivated. Fruit-trees and flowering-ſhrubs are here raiſed in great quantities, find a ready market, and turn to great account. They raiſe alſo foreſt-tree plants in great profuſion. It does not, however, appear ſo ſafe or eligible a plan, to truſt to the foreſt-timber plants raiſed in grounds ſo near London, eſpecially where they are to be planted out upon

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upon poor lands, or in more expoſed ſituations; as it is obvious, that plants raiſed as it were on hotbeds, and too haſtily brought forward, by the force of manure, will naturally make but a ſlow and ſickly progreſs, when tranſplanted to leſs rich and more unkindly ſoils. It is therefore humbly ſuggeſted to gentlemen, who have it in contemplation to become conſiderable planters, to turn their attention to raiſing their own nurſery; by which means, they will find not only a very great ſaving, but a prodigious ſatisfaction afterwards, in the health and future ſucceſsful progreſs of their plantations.

The rents in this part of the county are various: walled-in ground, goes as high as ſeven and eight pounds; but the more open grounds, do not exceed three and four pounds an acre;—ſome few, who rent under old leaſes, do not pay above fifty ſhillings an acre; but this is uncommon.

PROPRI-

PROPRIETORS.

For remarks and additional obſervations.

IN diſtricts ſituated in the neighbourhood of a metropolis, where the ground is rich and valuable, it may always be expected, that the land ſhould be divided into ſmall portions, and Middleſex accordingly is poſſeſſed by a great number of proprietors. Of theſe, his Grace the Duke of Northumberland, enjoys, in the neighbourhood of his well-known villa at Sion, the moſt conſiderable property, of any amongſt the nobility; and the grounds there, notwithſtanding the abſence and bad health of its noble owner, are kept in very excellent order. Of the commoners, Thomas Page, Eſq. of Wimbley-Park, is the greateſt proprietor; his place of reſidence is diſtinguiſhed by its peculiar neatneſs, and the poſſeſſion of from 2 to 3,000 acres, ſo near a luxurious capital, by a landlord who attends to the improvement of his eſtate, and the comfort of the people about him, is no unpleaſing circumſtance to mention. Caen Wood, [redacted] celebrated villa of the Earl of Mansfield, is not more diſtinguiſhed by the beauty of its ſituation, than the richneſs of the fields about it; in the cultivation of which, its late venerable owner took particular pleaſure; in which he is likely to be imitated by his reſpectable ſucceſſor. Sir Joſeph Banks, the Preſident of the Royal Society, frequently reſides, during the ſummer ſeaſon, at Spring-Grove, in this county, where he is trying many experiments for the improvement of wool, &c. the reſult of which, it would be deſirable to have in-

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ſerted, when the account, of which this paper is merely the outline, enters more into detail.

PRICE of LABOUR, &c.

The price of labour is pretty much the ſame all over Middleſex: men are hired at from nine to twelve ſhillings a week; nurſery-men have their hands, in general, cheaper than the common gardener or farmer; which can only be attributed to this, that their employment is more conſtant, and more to be depended on.

From Kenſington to Hounſlow, on either hand, for ſeveral miles, may be reckoned the great garden, to the North of the Thames, for the ſupply of London; you meet with nothing in this quarter that is not in the hands of common gardeners, except the pleaſure-grounds of ſome of the nobility, or of private individuals, annexed to their reſpective villas; the management of which it is not the buſineſs of a ſurvey of this kind to particularize.

COMMONS.

Hounſlow-heath, one of the moſt extenſive commons in this part of England, here preſents itſelf to the eye of a ſtranger, as a very noble field of improvement. Within ten miles of the capital, and in the midſt of a country, which, in point of cultivation, is almoſt wholly a garden, it is wonderful that means have not been fallen upon, to convert this extenſive waſte into arable land; and it is the more to be regretted, as it could be done at no great expence, the ſoil being in general ſtrong and good, and capable of producing crops equal to any in its neighbourhood. It is ſaid, that twelve contiguous pariſhes, have an intereſt in this extenſive common. To the poorer claſs there, the right of paſturage, and of cutting fuel, may be a matter of conveniency as well as emolument; but the advantages that would redound to the community at large, from its improvement, would, it is obvious, greatly over-

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balance any trifling private convenience of that kind. Barracks are now building by government upon a part of the heath; but this will not occupy above ten or twelve acres of a waſte containing ſome thouſands, which might ſoon be converted to the moſt valuable purpoſes of agriculture.

To enter into any minute detail, of the means of improving this common, may not at preſent be neceſſary. But in the mean time it may be proper to ſuggeſt, whether in the event of a diviſion of this extenſive waſte, this purpoſe would not be as well and more quickly promoted, under leaſes of reaſonable endurance, ſubject to a progreſſive increaſe of rent, than on any other plan. Such a mode of payment of rent, is not only natural upon new lands, but is the beſt and moſt effectual ſtimulus to induſtry. The exertions of a number of men, ſetting out upon a buſineſs of this kind, and improving upon the knowledge and experience of one another, would not only be an excellent ſchool for the obſervation of others, but would prove the ſureſt and moſt rapid means, of bringing the ground to the higheſt pitch of cultivation.

Finchley-common is another extenſive waſte, the greater part of which, being a kind of clay ſoil, is, if poſſible, a ſtronger argument for its cultivation; the means of improving a ſoil of this quality, by the common methods of ſummer fallow and liming, or paring and burning, where the ſurface is covered with ſtronger heath or ling, with the command of manure, which can at all times be obtained, and a proper rotation of crops at the commencement, would quickly and effectually convert this ſterile waſte into a tract of corn aud graſs ground, of fertility equal to the moſt ſanguine expectations of the improver *.

* According to Rocque's map of Middleſex, Hounſlow Heath contained, in 1754, about 6658, and Finchley Common 1243, acres.

Enfield-

For remarks and additional obſervations.

Enfield-chace is alſo another of theſe tracts, which demands the attention of the public, and calls loudly for the operation of the induſtrious farmer. It extends almoſt to Epping-foreſt, in Eſſex. A part of it ſtill continues ſtocked with deer. The ſoil is naturally good, and and very improvable, conſequently the ſame obſervations are applicable to it, which have already been made, in regard to Hounſlow-heath and Finchley-common; and the time, it is hoped, is not far diſtant, when ſuch waſtes ſhall no longer remain a diſgrace to the country. In regard to Enfield-chace, in conſequence of an act which paſſed about fifteen years ago, a part of it has been incloſed, and brought into cultivation. The improvements there have been conſiderable, particularly thoſe of Francis Ruſſel, Eſq but, in ſome inſtances, the expences, it is ſaid, exceeded the profit, and that good land might have been bought at a cheaper rate. It is doubted, whether the beſt mode of improving waſte lands, was then known, or at leaſt generally practiſed here. It is certain, that unleſs a judicious ſyſtem is purſued, the profit cannot be great. But now, ſo much additional light has been thrown upon the ſubject, that any perſon, deſirous of improving a waſte, cannot find any difficulty, in procuring information, reſpecting the beſt method of doing it to advantage, according to the nature and quality of the ſoil, and the other circumſtances to be taken into conſideration. Where the ſoil of new improved commons, is inclined to a ſtiff cold clay, the application and operation of lime, as a manure, is attended with the moſt beneficial and happy effects, and can be ſafely recommended from experience *. Afterwards, every thing depends upon a proper rotation of crops, and laying down the ground to graſs in the higheſt heart and order, without exhauſting it on the firſt outſet by a repetition of impoveriſhing crops of corn; which, with a view to a too early reimburſement, is too often unhappily the caſe.

* At leaſt it has been found to anſwer in many parts of the kingdom, when the ground has been properly drained, but not otherwiſe.

IMPROVED PART OF THE COUNTY.

For remarks and additional obſervations.

THAT part of the county of Middleſex beyond Hounſlow-heath, and towards Cranford, Uxbridge, &c. is in a ſtate of high cultivation; but, for the greater part, occupied in raiſing hay for the London-market; and this affords ſo ſure a profit, that all the lands in this county, not in the immediate contiguity of London, may be ſaid to be employed for that purpoſe. Two loads an acre, is reckoned a moderate crop; (the load here is only 1800 weight;) but two and a half is common, and ſometimes more. When hay is at £.5. a ton, or £.4. 10s. a load, as it is at preſent, and land in a ſituation to yield two cuttings, and after-graſs beſides, no plan can yield more profitable returns.

Towards Harrow and that part of the county, you find the ſame practice prevails, and from the ſame reaſons;—it is true, you now and then meet with a field under wheat, or other grain; and though the crops are abundantly rich, yet the owner does not find it his intereſt, to continue his ground in tillage, but lays it down to meadow again, after a crop or two, which generally anſwers the purpoſe for which it was broken up. But whether it is to free old graſs grounds from ſogging, or whatever other reaſons may induce

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induce the farmer to bring his fields under the plough, it has been matter of ſurprize to many intelligent perſons, why artificial graſſes, particularly clover and rye graſs, is ſeldom or ever uſed, when the huſbandmen of this county lay down their grounds to hay-crops. Perhaps they may have very ſubſtantial reaſons for avoiding theſe graſſes; but it might be worth the attention of the Board to make this a more particular ſubject of future enquiry, as in the courſe of my communications, I never had the good fortune to fall in with any one, that could give me ſatisfactory reaſons for their conduct, in this particular.

The method of making hay in this county, though reckoned the beſt in the South of England, does not appear to differ eſſentially, from the mode practiſed in the Northern counties. Here, having the advantage of an earlier harveſt, and conſequently having leſs riſque of the hay-crop being injured by the tropical rains, it is generally got in remarkably green. They do not, however, pretend to any regular method; nor is it poſſible for the moſt intelligent farmer, to preſcribe any fixed mode of making or getting in hay. The courſe of management muſt be determined by the weather; the ſole object being to avoid unneceſſary labour and expence, and to get it into ſtack, as green and full of juices as poſſible, without running any riſque of its ſuffering there, from not being (what is technically called) ſufficiently hayed.

The number of accidents, and conſequent loſſes, which happen annually by the firing of hay-ſtacks, in different places through England, may render it proper to mention, a method equally ſenſible and ſimple, which I once ſaw tried with ſucceſs in Suſſex. When a ſtack is ſo hot, as to raiſe apprehenſions of its taking fire, let a man be directed to that part of it which is moſt likely to begin to burn, which will be known by a greater degree of ſinking in the roof, and there cut out acroſs the ridge, and throw down,

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a ſpace no broader than juſt to allow him to work; and ſo continue cutting and throwing down the hay, till he gets below the heat. The warmth and ſteam will be ſo great, as to make it impoſſible for one man to work long at a time; but this may be remedied, at leaſt in ſome degree made eaſier, by making two or three men take it in turn. Perhaps it may be neceſſary to make more than one opening; but when the cure is effected, the apertures, or ſpaces ſo cut out, can be filled up again without injuring the ſtack, even in its external appearance.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

For remarks and additional obſervations.

Horſes.—In Middleſex, on account of its great population, there are more horſes employed than in any county in England. The draught horſes to be ſeen in the ſtreets of this city are, univerſally allowed to be the fineſt in the world; but they are not the produce of any particular diſtrict, the whole of England being ranſacked by the dealers, and the higheſt prices given for horſes of ſtrength and figure, for the dray-work of the metropolis. The value of land in this county is ſuch, as to exclude every idea of breeding either cattle or horſes, as an article of profit.

Roads.—The ſtrict attention paid to the keeping of the roads in this county, in the moſt perfect repair, is an object of the utmoſt conſequence, and is in general well attended to. By this means, the produce of the country is brought from greater diſtances, and at eaſier and cheaper rates, to market. To this may alſo be attributed, the ſafe, cheap, and expeditious conveyance, in ſtage-coaches, to and from every place round the metropolis; a mode of travelling, for which England ſtands perfectly unrivalled. In the conveniency, as well as in the variety of conſtruction, of theſe public vehicles of conveyance, London alſo excels in a ſuperior degree. Not many years ago, it would have appeared

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appeared perfectly fabulous, if any one had aſſerted, that at this period, travelling would be ſo cheap and expeditious, that a perſon could be carried from London to Southampton, a diſtance of ſeventy-five miles, in ten or twelve hours, at the very low rate of half a guinea, and in a carriage drawn by four horſes. It is true, this machine, to elude the duty, runs upon eight low wheels; but in point of eaſe and expedition, it is little inferior to the mail-coaches, and the difference of expence is very conſiderable.

Sheep. There are no ſheep bred, nor any fed in Middleſex, except by individuals for the uſe of their own tables. There are a few to be ſeen on Hounſlow-heath; but they are ſuch pitiful ſtarved-looking animals, as hardly to deſerve notice, except merely for the purpoſe of remarking, to what better purpoſes the ground might be devoted.

IMPOR-

IMPORTANT EXPERIMENTS.

For remarks and additional obſervations.

IN the account of Middleſex, it would be improper to omit taking notice, of ſome particulars I had an opportunity of ſeeing, at Earl's Court, the villa of Mr. John Hunter, the celebrated ſurgeon, who is trying many experiments, which may be of conſiderable ſervice, both to the gardener and the huſbandman.

Mr. Hunter's experiments, in regard to the vegetation of trees, it would be improper much to anticipate, until the reſult of them can be fully aſcertained. He is very curious in plants, and has, in his green-houſes and hot-houſe, a great variety of the moſt choice and rare productions of nature, in the collection of which he has neither ſpared pains nor expence.

With reſpect to foreſt-timber, this gentleman has at preſent an object under experiment, of very great importance, whether conſidered as a matter of curioſity, or of real utility. He conceives, that by a certain method in the training and management, he ſhall be able to direct or determine, the growth of certain kinds of trees, to any particular part of the trunk he may chooſe. For example, if from an oak, a plank is wanted of ſuch and ſuch an equal length and breadth, for a particular purpoſe, he is of opinion, that the tree may be trained and diſpoſed to grow

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in ſuch a manner that it will yield the plank of the exact dimenſions required. Mr. Hunter very properly obſerves, there may be ſome trees that may be more eaſily determined in their growth than others; and that for this, as well as many other obvious reaſons, it will be a work of time, before a complete ſyſtem can be deciſively aſcertained.

The variety of birds and beaſts to be met with at Earl's Court, is matter of great entertainment In the ſame ground you are ſurprized to find ſo many living animals from the moſt oppoſite parts of the habitable globe. Buffaloes, rams, and ſheep from Turkey, and a ſhawl-goat from the Eaſt Indies, are among the moſt remarkable of thoſe that meet the eye; and as they feed together in the greateſt harmony, it is natural to enquire, what means are taken, to make them ſo familiar and well acquainted with each other. Mr. Hunter told me, that when he has a ſtranger to introduce, he does it by ordering the whole herd to be ſhut up into an empty ſtable, or any other large out-houſe, with which they are all alike unaccuſtomed. The ſtrangeneſs of the place ſo totally engages their attention, as to prevent them from running at, and fighting with, the new-comer, as they would more readily do in the open field; and here they are confined for ſome hours, till they appear reconciled to the ſtranger, who is then turned out with his new friends, and is generally afterwards well treated. The ſhawl-goat was not, however, ſo eaſily reconciled to his future companions: he fought ſeveral battles, and at preſent appears maſter of the field. It is from the down that grows under the coarſe hair of this ſpecies of goat that the fine India ſhawls are manufactured. This beautiful as well as uſeful animal, was brought over only laſt June from Bombay, in the Duke of Montroſe Indiaman, Captain Dorin. The female unfortunately died. It was very obligingly preſented by the Directors, to Sir John Sinclair, the Preſident of the Britiſh

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Britiſh Wool Society. It is propoſed, under Mr. Hunter's care, to try ſome experiments with it in England, by croſſing, &c. before it is ſent to the North *.

Mr. Hunter has built vaults, in which he keeps his cows and buffaloes. Theſe arched byres, or cow-houſes, are certainly cooler in ſummer, and warmer in winter; and in ſituations, where ground is ſo valuable as in the neighbourhood of London, are an excellent contrivance. Mr. Hunter has his hay-yard over his buffaloe-ſtables. The expence of vaulting, does not exceed that of building and roofing common cow-houſes; and the vaults have this eſſential advantage or preference, that they require no repairs.

Mr. Hunter has cauſed his buffaloes to be trained to work in a cart; at firſt they were reſtive, and would even lay down; but now they are ſteady and ſo tractable, that they are driven through the ſtreets of London in the loaded cart. Theſe animals do not draw greater loads, than oxen of the ſame ſize and weight; and when one conſiders, to what valuable purpoſes, oxen can be employed in the various labours of the huſbandman, it is matter of regret, that they ſhould be ſo ſeldom uſed in England for draught. That oxen are a ſurer ſtock to the farmer, nobody will deny: they are not only fed at leſs expence than horſes, but they are not liable to ſo many diſeaſes. Beſides, when a horſe is old and worked out, he fetches nothing; whereas, the ox, after ſerving all the uſeful, laborious purpoſes

* Extract of the letter from Bombay, to the directors, reſpecting this goat, tranſmitted by Mr. Dominicus, of the India-Houſe, to ſir John Sinclair: "Your ſervants at Buſſora, contrary to their expectations, have lately pro- "cured and ſent to this preſidency (Bombay) two animals that produced the "ſhawl-wool. They adviſe us that they are of the beſt colour, and tolerably "hardy. The wool, which grows on different parts of their bodies, under "very long hair, is obtained by gently combing them."

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of the farmer for many years, is at laſt turned into the ſtall, and, being fattened for market, brings the judicious owner a price equal, if not ſuperior, to what he could have received for him, at a period of his life the moſt fit for labour.

HINTS FOR IMPROVEMENT.

For remarks and additional obſervations.

TO venture to point out any method, by which the preſent ſtate of agriculture in Middleſex might be improved, conſidering the very high degree of cultivation which it has already attained, at leaſt in ſome parts of it, in conſequence of the many concurring circumſtances in its favour, might be conſidered perhaps preſumptuous and unneceſſary. I ſhall hazard, however, with great deference, the following ſhort obſervations.

Hardly any thing farther ſeems material to add, to the obſervations already made on the improvement of the waſte lands. To that great object, the attention of the Board of Agriculture will naturally be directed: and a happy circumſtance it will be, if, under their auſpices, every acre in this, and in every other county in Great Britain, is brought under ſome uſeful and profitable mode of occupation.

The garden-ground, in general, cannot be better cultivated than it is.

The more frequent uſe of the plough, however, as a ſaving of labour to the market-gardeners, in the preparation of great part of their extenſive grounds, for the more common vegetable productions, ſuch as peaſe, cabbages, &c. is worth their conſideration.

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If hay from ſeeds, would fetch an equal price at market, with what is called hay from meadow, the farmer, it is preſumed, would not only find a much greater weight upon the acre, but it would give him an opportunity of having his lands more frequently under crops of grain; as the general reaſon for keeping lands almoſt continually under graſs, is, the difficulty of reſtoring the ſwerd. By ſowing artificial graſſes, the object is obtained at once; and I ſee nothing againſt the practice, but the prejudice of buyers in favour of hay from ſeeds, which it is moſt likely may be got over, upon a fair and compararive trial.

The effects of water as manure, is totally unknown all over this diſtrict, though it is perfectly well aſcertained, that there is none more efficacious, when properly applied. Along the banks of the Thames and the Colne, there are extenſive tracts of ground, which might thus be brought, at a ſmall expence, to the higheſt pitch of produce. It is ſaid that the greateſt part of Hounſlow-heath might thus be improved. Amongſt the other advantages of watering ground, it is not the leaſt, that the neceſſity of making uſe of any other manure, on the ground thus treated, being totally obviated, the farmer is thence enabled to make uſe of all the dung which his farm produces, in the enriching of his other fields.

The mixing of ſalt with the food given to cattle, and other ſorts of animals, in all poſſible ways, ought to be particularly recommended both for preſerving the health of the animal, and, in the caſe of milch-cows, for improving the quality, and [redacted] increaſing the quantity of their milk. In other countries, we are told, that ſalt diſſolved into brine, is ſprinkled over the paſture-land, which makes the graſs much wholeſomer, and more nouriſhing. Salt alſo, is mixed amongſt the hay when it is put up, greatly to its advantage;

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advantage; and the experience of the cow-keepers in the neighbourhood of London, ſufficiently aſcertains the greater avidity with which cattle devour their food, when mixed with ſalt, than when no ſuch ingredient is put into it; a practice which they have been obliged to give up, in conſequence of the expence attending it. Salt, alſo, is an excellent manure, particularly for rich land. If the importance of ſalt to huſbandry were ſufficiently underſtood, there can be no doubt, that the legiſlature, would ſoon be induced, to raiſe the ſame ſum of money, which the tax on ſalt produces, by ſome other mode, leſs prejudicial to the general intereſts of the country.

Middleſex can never be a breeding county; and the only kinds of ſtock likely to be attended to in it, are cattle and horſes. In regard to the firſt, more attention to the breed may be ſafely recommended. The neigbourhood of the metropolis, ought to be diſtinguiſhed by the beſt breed, of every ſort of animal, cultivated there. In that, as well as in other reſpects, the capital ought to take the lead, and ſhew an example to the remoter provinces. Every experiment ought to be tried, where it can certainly be done to the beſt advantage; and any breed, when brought to perfection in Middleſex, ought afterwards to be ſpread over the reſt of the kingdom. The cattle of this county, are certainly of a middling, and, in general indeed, rather of an inferior ſort, whether for the dairy or the butcher. As to horſes, thoſe to be found in London, cannot, any where, be ſurpaſſed, whether for ſtrength or beauty.

There are ſome commons near certain villages in Middleſex, and in other counties in the neigbourhood of London, as Clapham, Wimbleton, Putney, &c. the incloſure of which would be objected to, as tending to prevent that free circulation of air, ſo conducive to the health of the

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inhabitants; and to ſhut up places, calculated for the recreation and amuſement of themſelves and their families. Theſe objections, though they have at firſt ſome appearance of weight, yet are eaſily obviated; and the following plan, for that purpoſe, has occurred to a very zealous friend to the improvement of the country.

It is certainly a national loſs, to ſuffer as fine land as any in the kingdom, to lie almoſt totally waſte. To bring it into culture, let a leaſe of it be granted, under the authority of an act of parliament, by public auction, for 11, 15, or 21 years, and always relet on the following conditions; 1. That the tenant ſhall bring the common into complete good order, within three years; the ground to be ſown with white and yellow clover, and other ſhort graſſes; and to be railed in. 2. That he ſhall keep a certain number of milch-cows, and ſhall ſupply the poor in the neighbourhood with milk, at a certain fixed and rather low rate. 3. That he ſhall be obliged to furniſh the poor, having an intereſt in the common, with fuel, at a certain fixed and equitable rate, all the year round. 4. That he ſhall ſtock the common with the fineſt woolled ſheep, of the clothing ſort, who love ſpacious downs, and a ſhort bite, which will preſerve thoſe breeds in the country. And laſtly, the rent to be divided among all concerned, according to their reſpective intereſts. Theſe are ſhort hints, merely to explain, the general nature and tendency of a meaſure, which may be intitled to future conſideration.

On the whole, when compared to the extent of the diſtrict, the field for improvement, and for additional wealth to the public, is very conſiderable: to what extent cannot be exactly aſcertained. But it can hardly be doubted, that if every acre in Middleſex, were carried to the higheſt pitch of produce of which it is capable, and if the ſtock in the county were brought to its greateſt poſſible perfection,

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that it might be the means of adding, a million *per annum*, to the general opulence of the nation; an acquiſition, which, it is to be hoped, will ſoon be obtained, and which, in future times, will naturally and juſtly be attributed, to that inſtitution, which has fortunately directed the public attention, to the agriculture and internal improvement of the country, in preference to every other conſideration.

London, July 10, 1793.

P. S. A perſon who is deſirous of ſeeing a great variety of ſtock, cannot ſpend a few hours to more advantage, than in examining the market at Smithfield. He will there ſee, that for want of attending to the breeds of neat cattle and ſheep, THAT A LARGE PROPORTION OF THE HERBAGE OF ENGLAND IS WASTED, IN PRODUCING BONES AND OFFAL, INSTEAD OF MEAT. Is it therefore to be wondered at, that proviſions are dear? What a field here preſents itſelf, for national wealth and public improvement? Surely the time is not far diſtant, when the diſcoveries of intelligent men, ſanctioned by repeated experiments, will overturn every ancient prejudice, and when nothing but truth will prevail.